

## TOWN of DARIEN MONUMENTS & CEREMONIES COMMISSION

Town Hall, 2 Renshaw Road, Darien, Connecticut 06820

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#### Monuments and Ceremonies Commission

#### Minutes of the November 10, 2009 Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 P.M. by Chairman, Phil Kraft with Commissioners Edward Carabillo, John Geoghegan, David Polett, Karen Polett, Ken Reiss, Bob Riith, and Charles Scribner attending. Newly elected First Selectman, David Campbell also attended the first part of the meeting.

Minutes of the October 13, 2009 meeting were accepted as read on a motion by John Geoghegan, second by Ken Reiss.

The Veteran's Day ceremonies scheduled for November 11, at 8 A.M. at Darien High School and another at 11:00 A.M. at the Veteran's Memorial Circle at Town Hall were discussed. Town Hall will be closed, but the First Selectman has arranged for the custodian to be paid to come in to open the building so that the cameraman can provide a live feed of the ceremony to the students at the High School and Middle School. Phil will conduct the ceremony and read, "In Flanders Field." Karen has ordered a laurel wreath and a red, a white and a blue flower from Springdale Florists. The Selectmen have issued a Proclamation recognizing Veteran's Day. Michelle DeSoiza will set up the field of flags for the High School ceremony. A Civil Air Patrol cadet, Michelle has been asked to be the speaker for Memorial Day 2010.

Dave Polett reported that The Wreaths Across America convoy will arrive at the Darien VFW at approximately 3:00 P.M. on Wednesday, December 9. They will warm up, have chili and conduct a brief wreath-laying ceremony at 4:00 P.M. at the Veteran's Memorial Circle at the Darien Town Hall. Local officials should be invited to attend. Dinner at about 6:00 P.M. for the entire wreath contingent will be at the VFW and will be catered by Cindy Tanner and paid for by the Darien Masonic Club, Ivanhoe Masonic Lodge in Darien and Harmony Masonic Lodge in New Canaan. Phil suggested that the public could be invited to attend this dinner for a donation of \$10. Phil is working on publicity for this event.

After a breakfast for the wreath contingent at the Darien VFW, a wreath-laying ceremony will be held at the Darien High School flagpole at 8:45-9:30 A.M. on Thursday, December 10. The entire convoy of trailer trucks containing the 15,000 donated wreaths for Arlington Cemetery will park in front of the High School while this brief ceremony is held. Donna Russo is helping to coordinate this as is Michelle DeSoiza. Tudor Singers will be on hand.

At noon on Saturday, December 12, a ceremony will be held and wreaths will be placed on graves at Spring Grove Veteran's cemetery. The DAR is helping to sponsor these wreaths, and the public is encouraged to attend. Wreaths will be delivered to Phil's office and Commission members will need to help with the distribution and transportation of the wreaths to the cemetery. Chick will give the

cemetery plot plan to Phil so that he can decide where the nearly 150 wreaths should be placed for maximum exposure.

John reminded members that Marian Castell, Karen Polett, Bob Riith, Chick Scribner and Phil Morehouse need to be vetted by the RTC and re-appointed to the Commission by the Selectmen. Terms for these Commissioners expire in November 2009.

Dave Sanborn was mentioned as a possible Grand Marshal for the 2010 Memorial Day Parade.

Bob Riith proposed that the current slate of officers be duly re-elected for the coming year. That includes: Chairman, Phil Kraft; Vice Chairman, Ken Reiss; Secretary, Karen Polett; and Treasurer, Phil Morehouse. Nominations were approved on a motion by John Geoghegan, second David Polett. The Secretary cast one vote for the entire slate on a motion by Bob Riith, second Dave Polett.

Aullystup 1/12/10 chairman

Meeting was adjourned at 4:10 P.M. on a motion by Karen Polett, second John Geoghegan.

Submitted by,

Karen Kreitzberger Polett

Karen K. Polett

Secretary



#### December 8, Monuments Meeting Cancelled

Monday, December 7, 2009 3:56 PM

From: "karen and david polett" <harley87dp@yahoo.com>

1 File (31KB)



MCC November 09.doc

Hello Everyone,

Just spoke to Phil Kraft and we've decided to CANCEL tomorrow's meeting of the Monuments Commission because 50 boxes(400 total wreath) of wreaths are arriving at Phil's office tomorrow sometime and need to be transported and stored when they arrive. We need help Wednesday at the VFW about 1:30 serving the wreath caravan when they come into town cold and hungry. Then, they will go to Darien Town Hall for a brief ceremony about 4:00 and then to their hotel and back to the VFW for dinner around 5:00 P.M. or so. Please plan to come for the dinner. The wreath contingent is going to Darien High School early Thursday morning for a ceremony there before leaving for New York state and Arlington Cemetery.

We really need your help Saturday before the noon ceremony at the Spring Grove Veteran's Cemetery in Darien. We have 400 wreaths to place and need some man power to do this.

Next meeting will be January 12. I've attached the November minutes.

Have a wonderful holiday if I don't see you all.

Karen

# Historians plant oak from Civil War

An oak sapling from the Gettysburg Battlefield was planted Saturday at the site of the Fitch's Home For Soldiers on Noroton Avenue.

The tree, which originally grew on the Civil War Battlefield at Gettysburg, Pa., was obtained by Congressman Christopher Shays and shipped to Roberf E. Fatherley, one of Darien's historians, who asked Congressman Shays to get the tree donated to the town.

The ceremony, held on the date of the original Memorial Day on May 30, observed the sacrifices made by members of the Armed Forces and others in preserving the USA, and to express gratitude to a Darien resident —Benjamin Fitch — who, in 1864 donated five acres of his land in Darien and \$100 thousand to build a home on it to benefit the soldiers, sailors and other veterans of the Civil War and their widows and families.

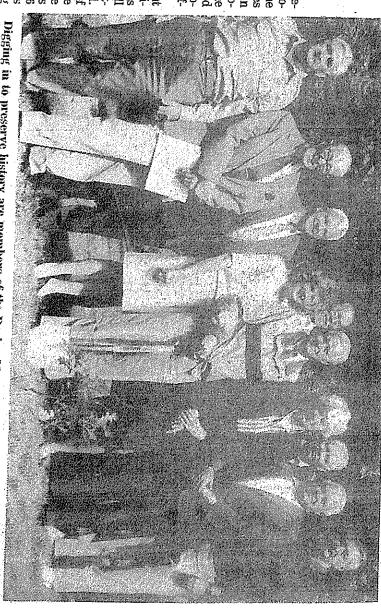
A monument at the site of the Fitch's Home is maintained by the

Darien Monuments and Ceremonies Committee marking the location of the parade ground at the home. The plaque on it describes the patriotic fervor of Benjamin Fitch which moved him to establish, while the Civil War raged, the first Veterans' Home in the United States. For many years, it provided a home for those who suffered from that conflict.

Later, the State of Connecticut assumed the financial responsibility and in 1940 the home was moved from Darien to Rocky Hill where it survives as the Connecticut Veterans' Home and Hospital

Many Connecticut veterans of the Civil War were cared for at the facility when it was in Darien. The appreciation of its many residents was heartfelt and resulted in 1896 in the planting of a tree which was then moved form the Gettysburg Battlefield where it grew on Little Round Top to the Darien site of Fitch's Home. A plaque describing the gift of this tree was creeted near the tree in 1925.

The tree planted and dedicated this year on Memorial Day by the Monunents and Ceremonies Conmittee was a replacement for the



Philip A. Morchonse, Jantina Atkinson, Charles Scribner, Anthony Improta and John Rooney. from left, Lawrence Nardine, Robert E. Fatherley, Henry M. Sanders, Karen Polett, Lynn Hanks Digging in to preserve history are members of the Darien Monuments and Ceremonies Committee

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70 DARIEN TIMES

## In disbelief that flags are gone from overpass

To the Editor:

on the Noroton Avenue over- two fresh, new flags that we fasteners. If someone needed Commission.

Darien has proudly displayed Polett of the Monuments & never ceases to renew my one with grommets on both flags on the overpasses of Ceremonies Commission and patriotic pride. I-95. It began as an informal the Connecticut Patriot Guard show of solidarity and patrio- and I put two new Noroton disappointment to see that would do such a thing. tism to the many thousands of Avenue flags up at 3:30 p.m. Friday morning they were travelers and commuters who They were specially ordered pass under these structures flags with grommets on both every day. A private citizen ends, so they can be secured indicates to me that it haphas taken over the duty of safely on the fence over the keeping the flags fresh over highway. We were met with Old King's Highway, and waves and honks by pass-National Veterans Services ers-by (and passers-under) as enough, nor would it have Fund and the chairman of the Fund has taken over the task we went about securing the completely removed all eight Monuments & Ceremonies

Imagine my shock and gone without a trace! They were there Wednesday, which pened on Thanksgiving Day.

expected to last the winter. a new flag, one would think On Monday, Nov. 23, Dave It is a wonderful feeling that they wouldn't have stolen

I am very sad that someone

Phil Kraft

The writer is commander of Darien VFW Post 6933, It couldn't have been the executive director of the wind; the wind wasn't strong National Veterans Services



## Fran Into, Treasurer CT DAR Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution

September, 2009

Dear Friend,

This year will mark the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wreaths Across America ceremonies and holiday wreaths being placed on veteran's gravestones in Arlington National Cemetery and around the world in honor of our veterans who have served our country and preserved our freedom. Simultaneously with the ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery on Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon EST, Wreaths Across America ceremonies will be held at the three CT State Veterans' Cemeteries: State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown; Col. Raymond Gates Memorial Cemetery, Rocky Hill; and Spring Grove Veterans Cemetery, Darien. Additionally, ceremonies will also take place in many towns and cemeteries across Connecticut.

The mission of Wreaths Across America <a href="www.wreathsacrossamerica.org">www.wreathsacrossamerica.org</a> is: To Honor, Remember and Teach our children the value of our freedom – one veteran at a time - by sponsoring a wreath (\$15 each) to be placed on the gravestone during these ceremonies. There are over 6,000 veterans buried in the State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown (code CTMVCM) and over 1500 buried each in Col Raymond Gates Memorial Cemetery, Rocky Hill (code CTCRGR); and Spring Grove Veterans Cemetery, Darien (code CTSGVD). Contributions for wreaths to be placed on gravestones can be made through CTDAR State Treasurer, Fran Into, 16 Highland Green, Cromwell, CT 06416 (checks should be made out to Wreaths Across America). Sponsorship may also be done on-line at <a href="www.wreathsacrossamerica.org">www.wreathsacrossamerica.org</a> by entering the cemetery code of your choosing (noted above) and CTDAR0002 as the sponsoring group, so that the maximum number of wreaths will be sent to the location of your choosing.

Feel free to contact me with any questions or for assistance. Please plan on coming to one of these ceremonies to Honor and Remember our Veterans. Please cut out the order portion below and mail with your check.

Sincerely, *Fran Into* 

Cut out the section below and mail with your check

Amount of check

Number of wreaths

Darien Code CTSGVD

Mail to: CTDAR Fran Into
16 Highland Green

Cromwell, CT 06416

Your name and address



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## AREA NEWS

### NEVER FORGETTING



KATHLEEN O'ROURKE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Above, Retired Navy veteran Pete Kenyon, of Darien, salutes as he lays a wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Navy. Kenyon joined other veterans, boy scouts, volunteers and high school students as they participated in the Wreaths Across America ceremony at Connecticut Veterans Cemetery in Darien on Saturday.

Freddy Hinkley, 11, of Darien, kneels for a moment after placing a wreath on a grave in Darien on Saturday.